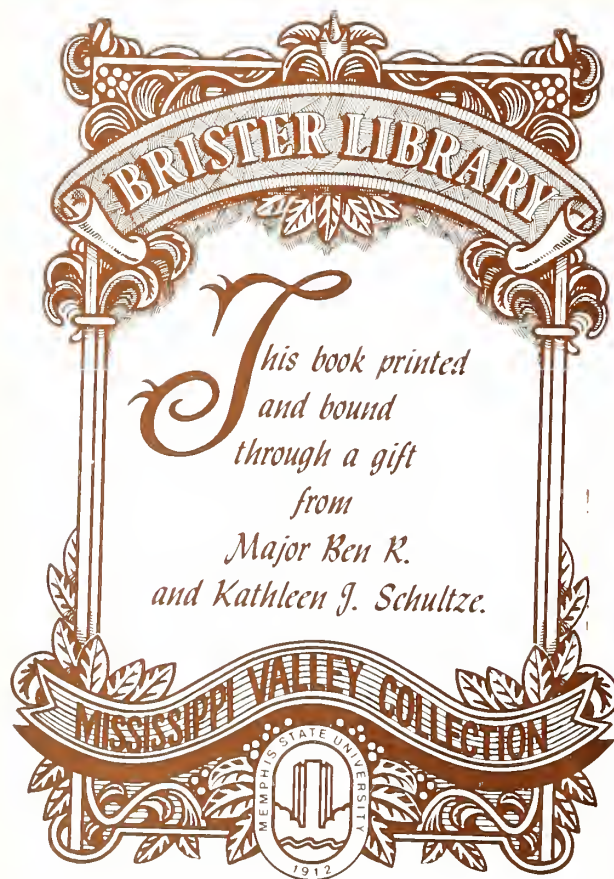


AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE WINFIELD DUNN ADMINISTRATION  
INTERVIEWS WITH  
CHARLES WOMACK

BY - CHARLES W. CRAWFORD  
TRANSCRIBER - MARY MORGAN  
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE  
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AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE WINFIELD DUNN ADMINISTRATION

INTERVIEWS WITH CHARLES WOMACK

JULY 22, 1979

BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD

TRANSCRIBER - MARY JANE MORGAN

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

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PLACE

Jackson, TN

DATE

July 22, 1979

# 55

Charles R. Hornack

(INTERVIEWEE)

Chas W. Crawford

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives  
of the John Willard Brister Library  
of Memphis State University)



THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY.  
THIS PROJECT IS "THE WINFIELD DUNN PROJECT." THE DATE IS JULY 22, 1979,  
AND THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. CHARLES R. WOMACK IN JACKSON, TENNESSEE.  
THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD AND IS TRANSCRIBED BY MARY  
JANE MORGAN. INTERVIEW # I.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Womack, let's start by getting a little  
background information of a biographical nature.  
We might start with when and where you were born, and some information  
about your family, and go ahead from there.

MR. WOMACK: Dr. Crawford, I was born July 4, 1905, in  
McMinnville, Tennessee, which is in Warren  
County. I had lived there with the exception of a brief period in about  
1926, when I went to Florida for six months, up until the time I came  
to Jackson. I arrived here the first day in 1929. I went to grade  
school and graduated from high school in McMinnville. And out of high  
school--well, before that, from the time I was in the sixth grade, I work-  
ed as a printer's devil in a local print shop, learned the printing trade  
back when it was, typesetting was by hand and you ran a press fed by hand.  
I learned all that while I was in grade school, and worked up until the  
last year of high school, my senior year, at that job. On graduation from  
high school, I had an offer to go with a hardware firm there, a prominent  
hardware firm, and also another offer to go with a lumber manufacturing  
concern, Walkern's Fifth Lumber Company. I took the manufacturing offer  
as bookkeeper without any experience or training. But enrolled in a cor-



respondence course with the, oh, let me recall, the one in Chicago, a very prominent one in Chicago.

DR. CRAWFORD: LaSalle, perhaps.

MR. WOMACK: LaSalle Extension University. And completed that course finally; it took a few years to do it, in higher accountancy. I remained with the lumber company for a couple of years, probably, and went to Florida, working in the printing trade down there. I came back and went to work for a shoe manufacturing concern in McMinnville as bookkeeper. And that company went broke, left town, and I was working for Forrest Nursery Company, owned by the Boyd brothers, at the time I came to Jackson. My employment here was brought about by Mr. John Seaman, who lived in McMinnville and had just bought out, along with his nephew, Byron Seaman, the Cooperage business owned by Harland--Morris Manufacturing Company here in Jackson. I came here and set up their books--the company known as Jackson Cooperage Company. I stayed with Jackson Cooperage, that was first of 1929 until September 15, 1932. Of course, the Depression was on, and I was out of a job because there just wasn't any business going on. I went to work within two weeks for Southern Supply Company, wholesale plumbing-heating firm, as bookkeeper for \$75.00 a month. I went through all the offices there, and retired in 1970 as Chairman of the Board.

DR. CRAWFORD: This was Southern Supply Company, sir?

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: At what time did you start working for them?

MR. WOMACK: September 15, 1932.





DR. CRAWFORD: One of the lower points in the Depression.

MR. WOMACK: Yes. I didn't want to go back to McMinnville because I felt like I would have been a failure to have gone off and not made my fortune and gone back to the home town. Not that I didn't like McMinnville.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was the company successful, Southern Supply, after you started work?

MR. WOMACK: Yes. That year, probably the very worst year during the Depression, we made a little money.

We were in the black. And every year until I left there in 1970, it grew into a million-dollar net worth corporation.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that's a remarkable growth record. Of course, you did get in at a time there was room for growth.

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: You held quite a number of offices all the way through the company until retirement, didn't you?

MR. WOMACK: Yes, I was elected secretary, I believe in 1933, and treasurer, probably 1938, secretary-treasurer. And when the principal officer, an owner of the company, Mr. Mack Marsh, died in 1949, I was made vice-president. And on the death of the man who succeeded Mr. Marsh, Mr. McCutchin, in 1955, I became president. I was president for twelve years, and about 1968, the other officers there, bought myself and another gentleman out, and I retired in 1970 as Chairman of the Board.



DR. CRAWFORD: During your years with Southern Supply, what sort of community activity did you engage in?

MR. WOMACK: Well, I worked with the Chamber of Commerce, closely, and was president of the Chamber in the year 1962, I believe. I was, prior to that time, president of what was known as the local Retail Merchants' Association. And I was in politics after about 1950, I began to get interested in the Republican Party at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, at about 1950, let's see, Gordon Browning would have been governor; the Republican Party would have been quite weak in the state. What were the circumstances of your first involvement in politics?

MR. WOMACK: I think that I really---I say it was 1950, I suspect the first involvement was 1948. I really voted Dixiecrat for Thurmond. And I don't know as I actively worked for him, but up until that time, I didn't take any part at all in politics. And then when Truman, I thought, made a pretty poor president, and Eisenhower came along, I got active in his campaign in '52, the first time I was really active.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was the regular Republican Party, in the Eisenhower campaign. And his was a candidacy that led to change in the Republican Party in many parts of the South, for young people in business and professions did get involved. And I think part of the party's growth starts from that time. Before then, often, a very small group of more or less professional politicians had





managed the Republican arty, mainly for the patronage. What was the situation here in Madison County?

MR. WOMACK: Well, of course, in number, the Republicans were very small, and Roy Hall probably was the one that got me interested in becoming active in the party. The Republicans had to be very cautious, I think, about recruiting people, not particularly for the party, but for the campaign. They rallied the Citizens for Eisenhower, as you recall, and I suppose that's the way I started working. In fact, I don't know as we had really a Republican headquarter as such in the county in 1952. I think it was altogether Citizens for Eisenhower, Republicans working with anybody that would work with them.

DR. CRAWFORD: I know that happened in Shelby County. There had been a rather limited group of older Republican leaders. They started getting younger people involved then; Judge Harry Wellford's case in point.

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: And there were others who had their first support of the party working for Eisenhower. How did you do in that campaign in Madison County?

MR. WOMACK: I can't quote you any figures, but we had a good vote, and I'm not certain now whether we carried for Eisenhower or not. I'm inclined to believe we did. I wish I had my figures here.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was a very **popular** candidate.

MR. WOMACK: Yes, being a war hero.



DR. CRAWFORD: Now, that itself was not a party race, at least, not the Citizens for Eisenhower, but, did you go from there into service to the party?

MR. WOMACK: Yes, I worked very hard in that campaign, and then we tried to get a pretty permanent organization, but we weren't successful, I don't think, until the '60's, when they had a really good organization in the county. I did enough work that in 1956 I was elected the delegate to the national convention in San Francisco. Some of the old-line party people out in the district resented the fact that a newcomer, particularly a former Democrat, was made a delegate to the convention. [I] recall an old gentleman from Paris. He had a lot to say about it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, there had been for some time a resentment of new people, and that was one thing that had kept the party small and weak.

MR. WOMACK: I think so.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you do at the San Francisco convention?

MR. WOMACK: Well, of course, it was just a "rubber stamp" convention. We did get to meet Vice-President Nixon. He had all the delegates to his room, and I met him personally. That was my first contact with President---now, of course, an ex-president ---Nixon. I sat on the convention floor. One incident I remember. I was right on the aisle, and one of the delegates from up in East Tennessee was about half drunk, was sitting in my seat when I got there, and I made him move, and he didn't like it at all. [He] had some words to say, but



anyway, I sat there. And the first time I had seen Ike---as he came into the convention---I just squatted down with my camera and was going to take his picture. And the security officer got me back in my seat right quick. They didn't take any chances.

DR. CRAWFORD: Hmmm. And that was the President?

MR. WOMACK: And, of course, all were supposed to be delegates down on the floor, or alternates, one.

Of course, we voted on certain resolutions, but all of it was routine. Joe Martin was the chairman of the party then, and I think the chairman of the convention. And I remember some clown from up in Nebraska, somewhere, I don't know whether you probably read this in the paper, he got up when they came along [to] nominations, he nominated Joe Blough, I believe it was. They got a laugh out of it, everybody, all the cameramen gathering around to see what was going on, they had to have some excitement. And there's some question about whether Ike---I think he'd already had a heart attack at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, I believe that was an issue.

MR. WOMACK: And a fellow from Milan, I don't recall his name, he got a lot of publicity from the media.

(news media) He'd made a bet with anybody that would come along that Eisenhower, I think \$10,000, that Ike would live out his second term if he was elected. I don't know whether he got any offers or not, but you had to have something to have some excitement at that convention because it was sort of routine.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, he would have won, had he found a taker





for that offer.

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you follow up that convention? What did you do next? Did you remain active?

MR. WOMACK: I don't remember too much. Of course, Eisenhower went on through his, and Nixon ran in '60 against Kennedy, didn't he?

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes.

MR. WOMACK: And lost. I was in charge of Nixon's campaign in 1960. [We] had our head offices in what is the old G. H. Robinson Building here now. And we had a lot of young folks in that, very young, just teenagers and all helped in that campaign. And I think we carried this county for Nixon. Of course, there's a lot of people that opposed, in this area, I think, opposed Kennedy because [he was] a Yankee and a Catholic. But along about sometime in the '60's, I don't recall exactly when, I was made chairman of the party here.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that county chairman, sir?

MR. WOMACK: Of the Madison County party.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. WOMACK: And I've tried to be active in most every campaign since, although I'm letting up some now.

The younger element came in, and most of those are former Democrats.

Just a new generation, in fact, one of them, Jimmy Exxon, was a Democrat, and switched over. I believe he was Crockett's manager one year.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, '74, that would have been.



MR. WOMACK: I may be wrong about that. But anyway, he's been very active in the Republican Party since. And the present chairman is a young man about 35 years old.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who is the present chairman?

MR. WOMACK: David Farmer. Roy Hall's law firm. Of course, Rick Tomlin has been the chairman in the past.

DR. CRAWFORD: He has been a member of the party a long time, I suspect.

MR. WOMACK: Yes, I think his family were Democrats. He probably was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, when 1970 came around, you had gotten experienced in political activity as chairman of the county, the party in the county, and with your experience, convention and election, it was not unreasonable that Winfield Dunn would get in touch with you.

MR. WOMACK: That's true. But my first experience, Doctor, or my first time to know Dr. Winfield Dunn, was during the '60's, probably about the time that Goldwater ran, and I ran my legislative race. He was helping us try to get a permanent party organization established here. He came over from Memphis with some other Republican people, some ladies and men, I don't recall the others right off. But I do recall Dr. Dunn very vividly. He was a good-looking gentleman, and a good talker, and was a lot of help to us, getting our organization set up.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why do you remember him when you don't remember





the other members of that delegation?

MR. WOMACK: Well, just because he had the charisma, I guess.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. So you had met him in his trip over to help in the county.

MR. WOMACK: Some several years prior to his race.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had you been in touch with him since?

MR. WOMACK: No, not until the campaign came along. And he came by---I think I pointed out the Continental Hotel.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes.

MR. WOMACK: I was interested in that. He came by to see me and missed me there. But I think he'd contacted Roy Hall on the same trip. And I think at a later trip over here, we arranged for me to take him around to meet the press, and the other media. And we had lunch together, and after lunch, I took him to the Jackson Sun first, that's my recollection. The editor interviewed Dr. Dunn there, and then went next door to WTGS, which is owned by the Sun, and the people there interviewed him, and then we went out to the WPPJ TV station out on, Radio, it's on News Street.

DR. CRAWFORD: Is that the one on the hill?

MR. WOMACK: It's on News Street, at that time. And they interviewed him there, and came back to WTXI, and he was interviewed there. And we met some of the people around town on that occasion. And he was back over during the campaign. I don't recall too much about that right off.



DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember the first time you did meet him?

MR. WOMACK: It was when he was over here from Memphis to help us organize.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. All right, now, how did you learn about his campaign in 1970? Did you read or hear news?

MR. WOMACK: Read about it in the news, and on TV.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would have been early in the year?

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you remember anything about your first meeting with him after the campaign started?

MR. WOMACK: Well, you mean, before his nomination or after? Before his race in the primary or after?

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh, after his race started, but before the election.

MR. WOMACK: I can't recall right now. We had some, he was over here campaigning but I don't remember too much what went on then. I do remember, after the election, we had a great dinner out at the National Guard Armory in which he spoke, and kind of a celebration of the victory. And I went along with a co-chairman, a lady co-chairman, and set that up with people all over west Tennessee. Filled up the place.

DR. CRAWFORD: How well-attended was it? Do you have an idea about the number?



MR. WOMACK: No. We had all we could accomodate out there, I don't remember the exact number, probably five, or six hundred there. It was a seated dinner.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did you decide to support Winfield Dunn? There were other options, you know. Claude Robertson and Mr. Jenkins was running, and there was Maxey Jarman.

MR. WOMACK: Well, Mr. Jarman came through here and I tried to show him around. He came to my office at Southern Supply, and I introduced him around there. I was impressed with his business ability. And Bill Jenkins had some friends here that wanted me to help support him. I liked him all right. I had met Claude Robertson at state conventions, so forth. Incidentally, I forgot to mention a while ago, I was a member of the state executive committee for a few years. I think that's when I met Claude. But I guess the primary reason I supported Winfield was because he's a West Tennessean, and we hadn't had a governor from West Tennessee in, how many years, I don't know.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, one had not been elected, I believe, since 1920. That would have been fifty years.

MR. WOMACK: Yeah. Was that Patterson?

DR. CRAWFORD: No, that was Alf Taylor.

MR. WOMACK: Patterson was a Democrat, wasn't he?

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes.

MR. WOMACK: But I'm talking about from West Tennessee, I don't know . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: It had been fifty years since one had been elec-



ted from West Tennessee. What do you think his chances of being elected were at first when the campaign began?

MR. WOMACK: Well, several here, including myself, thought he was going to have to work mighty hard for it, because the Democrats had been in power so long, and incumbency is a great asset.

DR. CRAWFORD: How large would you estimate the Republican Party was at that time, beginning in 1970?

MR. WOMACK: In this county?

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. WOMACK: I suspect you couldn't have gotten together a hundred people ready to come out in the open and call themselves Republican. There might be some others that would consider themselves Republican, but wouldn't want people to know it.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's an awfully small number.

MR. WOMACK: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, it had been traditional, hadn't it, that the Republican Party had remained small and weak?

MR. WOMACK: Yes. This part of the state has just been traditionally Democratic, and there's still a lot of spillover from the Civil War, I think, in a lot of people here.

DR. CRAWFORD: I believe that's true. It's been slow getting over it.

MR. WOMACK: And there are people here that still would vote for the devil before they'd vote for a Republi-





can. They wouldn't mind telling you that. That's what we call "Yellow Dog" Democrats.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. Well, if you had, say, definitely less than fifty people, considerably less, active supporters of the party in '70, how has it gone since then?

MR. WOMACK: Oh, we've got a lot of people that's come over to the party and willing to come out and call themselves Republican, and become active workers. I don't know how many. We can see it. There are many Republicans here now, I'm sure, quite a few less than the Democrats, but still we've got a pretty good organization. And we have to depend on Democrats to help us in elections--and Independents--to win. We have one officer in the county court, I mean the county offices. The tax assessor, has been re-elected for several terms. We have some Republicans on the County Court. Up until about 1970, that hadn't been the case. Jerry Tomlin is the county attorney, a Republican. He's been re-elected by the Democrat County Court. So we've made considerable progress, I think.

DR. CRAWFORD: It seems so. Do you know the approximate size of the county in the last decade?

MR. WOMACK: It's about 60,000.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. And the second largest in West Tennessee. Therefore it would be important for Winfield Dunn to have what exposure he could in Madison County, for as you know a candidate can't very well get around to 95 counties, at least not equally in time. How do you deal with the problem of his campaign here? First, in



the matter of advertising. How did you do that?

MR. WOMACK: Well, we ran newspaper advertising, had him on the radio, TV, all those sorts of things, try to give him as much exposure and time, as he had time to give.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you find it easy to get him in the county when you needed him?

MR. WOMACK: Well, we usually got him at a time convenient. A lot of person-to-person contact, which, I think, impressed most people.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you think he did better at that or in his speeches to large groups?

MR. WOMACK: Uh, one incident, he came over well, is when (laughing) John J. Hooker came down here to debate him. And he just outdid Hooker. He had the audience with him. And I recall particularly Hooker making some remark relative of a Mississippian coming in here, trying to be governor. And of course, there'd been others from Mississippi had been governor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, Ellington's a good example.

MR. WOMACK: But Winfield gave him a good answer. I don't recall how he put it, but he certainly won the crowd over with that. But I would say that personal contact won him a lot of votes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. You used the routine forms of advertising, though, billboards, newspaper, radio, signs . . .



MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What sort of feedback did you start getting?  
Sometimes you can tell what people feel about  
your candidate, you know.

MR. WOMACK: We felt like we were making good progress with  
it. I think most folks had the impression I  
did of Winfield, that he was sincere, he wasn't doubletalking, talking  
down to you, and just one of the voters.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you handle financing in the campaign?  
I know you had to raise money and you had a  
small party in which to raise it.

MR. WOMACK: Uh, we had a campaign treasurer, Bill Ashfield  
was our treasurer. Uh, we just went out to the  
businesses and anybody (end of tape).









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JACKSON, TENNESSEE. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD AND IS  
TRANSCRIBED BY MARY JANE MORGAN. INTERVIEW # II.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Womack, we'll go ahead here. You were raising money for the campaign in 1970. What expenses did you anticipate in it? Did you open an office in town?

MR. WOMACK: Yes, we had our office during the campaign. Of course, between campaigns we didn't have any.

You asked how we went about raising funds. We went back to our old lists that we'd had since the '60's, previous contributions, which, most of them, you could depend on to come through. And we tried to find new ones. In the '60's we began to have new plants come in town. Most of these people that were in management were from the East or North but were already Republicans, and we'd get support from those.

As far as the campaign expenditures were concerned, we tried to make up a budget and stick with it, although sometimes we couldn't. We'd end up with a deficit and have to make that up, but I don't recall that we had a deficit in Winfield's campaign. I do recall we had one in the '60's when Julius Hurst ran for Congress.

DR. CRAWFORD: In the old Seventh District?

MR. WOMACK: Yes, he ran against, Ray Blanton, you know. And he lost to Ray, right before he went to Congress,



which was a tragedy, I think. But, anyway, we used those lists and tried to expand them every campaign that came along. So we were fairly successful in our fund-raising.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were able to meet all your expenses, then, and not call on money from outside?

MR. WOMACK: Yes, that's my recollection.

DR. CRAWFORD: Although I believe state headquarters made material available and other things.

MR. WOMACK: They did that, and usually in some of the legislative races they would furnish some money. But I don't recall us getting any money from the state headquarters in the governor's campaign. We possibly could have.

DR. CRAWFORD: What sort of organization did you set up in the county? You maintained an office in town; did you organize by wards?

MR. WOMACK: Yes. During that period, we did. We had a campaign chairman, of course, and most of that was handled by him. But we had good support from our ladies, and they did a lot of precinct work.

DR. CRAWFORD: What title did you hold in that campaign?

MR. WOMACK: In Winfield's campaign?

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MR. WOMACK: I don't recall now whether I was county chairman during his campaign or not. But I don't think I was his campaign manager. I could have been county chairman.



DR. CRAWFORD: Do you have any idea how many times he got into Madison County in the campaign?

MR. WOMACK: I don't think he was in here after the primary, over four or five times. Of course, this is a big state and you had a lot of territory to cover.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, of course, Bill Jenkins was from East Tennessee, and Maxey Jarman from Middle, Claude Robertson from East; Winfield Dunn was the only candidate from West Tennessee. Do you think that influenced voting here?

MR. WOMACK: Yes, no doubt about it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, he also brought to the race an unusual background. It was very unusual for any kind of medical practitioner to run for office. Do you know if there was any doubt about his qualifications for office?

MR. WOMACK: I don't think anybody questioned that. Might have been some of that, but a man that's completed the education it takes to become a dentist surely has a lot of practical experience that can help him.

DR. CRAWFORD: He certainly works well with people.

MR. WOMACK: And I think it was pretty well known that he had been in politics in Shelby County for a long time, and should know how the government operates.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. So organization and financing and advertising you had to give attention to. What were the main problems of the campaign as you saw them?



MR. WOMACK: I think it's just getting voter awareness of our candidate. And getting out to vote.

That's always a problem. A lot of people are apathetic about exercising the right of ballot. And it seems to be getting worse instead of better.

DR. CRAWFORD: I fear that it is. Now, at the beginning of this period, most people were rather uncertain of his chances. However, in the fall of 1970 after the general election in August, people started getting a feeling, many did, that Winfield was going to win. Were you feeling that way by Election Day?

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had you been that confident all the way through, or did it develop in the campaign?

MR. WOMACK: No, it developed in the campaign. I don't want to put any words in anybody's mouth, but I think I recall Roy Hall making the statement that he didn't have much confidence that Winfield could win, early. He might repudiate that, but I think I recall that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you changed your conviction. At least you became more certain later in the campaign.

What convinced you?

MR. WOMACK: Well, people were beginning to talk about him. He got exposure, and they liked him.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was happening all over the state. How much help do you think you received from John J.

Hooker?





MR. WOMACK: I think, right in this area here, that was a turning point, because John J. came over poorly. John J. Hooker had been in my home. He was here at my daughter's wedding. And John J.'s got a lot of ability, but people kind of get turned off with some of his actions.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes. Well, I have told Winfield--Governor Dunn--that I thought one of his best allies in 1970 was John J. Hooker. The way it turned out, that was a help.

MR. WOMACK: Incidentally, John J.--maybe I oughtn't tell this--but I don't think he was invited to the wedding. Of course, my son-in-law is Harry Corsen. Incidentally, Harry Wellford and Harry Corsen and Doug Curry here, and someone else had a foursome in Vanderbilt in tennis. But anyway, John J. came to the wedding uninvited, is my recollection, and came down here. Evidently, he'd been out carousing the night before. He showed up at a breakfast at the Club that the Corsens had. And he was hardly presentable there. I don't think he even had a tux, he had to borrow one to wear to the wedding. He's a good fellow, I guess, but I don't think he'd have made a good governor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, evidently, many people felt that way in 1970. Do you remember Election Day that year? Well, let's see, let's deal with this in part. First, do you remember the August primary election?

MR. WOMACK: I don't remember specifically much about it. I just remember being happy that we'd won, and



we had a candidate from West Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. Do you remember, then, how you felt on the general election day?

MR. WOMACK: Well, we were really jubilant here.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did all of your workers remain at headquarters, or did any go to Nashville?

MR. WOMACK: Yes, we had a big turnout at headquarters here, and I think a good contingent of our workers went to the inaugural invitations, and took in all the parties and all. I know I was up there on Inaugural Day, and my wife and I liked to froze to death. It was a cold day.

DR. CRAWFORD: I remember that one well.

MR. WOMACK: (Laughter) And we enjoyed the parties and all. And I believe, uh, sometime later, that we were invited to go to the Mansion, and that was an awfully cold day. That could have been during, after the Inaugural, I can't recall.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, that might well have been in that time.

MR. WOMACK: We stood in line there for three or four hours. And I left my topcoat in my car by mistake.

[We were] taken by buses from the church nearby, a church parking lot. And I had to get under my wife's--she had her fur coat on. That's the only way I could keep from freezing. But we did go in, and got to shake hands with Winfield and Betty.

DR. CRAWFORD: I remember that weekend and the Inaugural Ball. There were many people there who had not been



to one in quite a while.

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, he took office with high hopes on your part. Were your hopes borne out by what he actually did as governor?

MR. WOMACK: Absolutely. I thought he made a great governor. And I think, generally, that history will show that.

DR. CRAWFORD: It will, I think, at least show that he was an honest governor.

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: For I know of no scandal whatsoever affecting the Dunn administration. What effect did it have on people in Madison County? Did his administration change the strength of the party or the opinion of the people here, so far as you know?

MR. WOMACK: It strengthened the party, no doubt about it. Of course, Governor Dunn had his committee in each county, at least supposed to have. I guess you could call them patronage committees, but I think it's an improvement over what . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: The word preferred then was "Good Government Committees".

MR. WOMACK: Yes. Uh, it was an improvement over what has gone on in previous Democratic administrations, because you usually had one man. And the one man here in this county had



been Mr. Morgan for years, who is a fine gentleman. But that's too much power to leave to one man, I think. And our committee, at all the sessions I was in, I think I was in most of them, if there was a good Democrat for the job, we would pass on it. It wasn't a matter of strictly Republican, regardless.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. Well, your actions were mainly review, weren't they?

MR. WOMACK: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he get back into the county during the time he was governor?

MR. WOMACK: Yes, I mentioned the time we had the big dinner. There were other occasions, he came down.

I remember one at the fairground. I don't remember exactly what the occasion was, we had a big crowd down there from all over West Tennessee. I remember Robin Beard was there. Might have been off-year elections for Congress, I guess it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. Beard and Anderson.

MR. WOMACK: The governor was down here, yes. And spoke, and I took him to the plane that day. He was here on other occasions, I'm sure. Right offhand, I don't recall what they were. He kept contact with the people in the county.

DR. CRAWFORD: When he left office, then, the party was stronger as a result of his being there.

MR. WOMACK: Yes sir.





DR. CRAWFORD: In Madison County there had been, before that time, a great deal of, well, if not illegality, at least closed procedures in which people dispensed patronage and state contracts. Did you have any difficulty with the changes you brought in that? For I know that did change.

MR. WOMACK: Oh, we had some folks that felt like they were mistreated, I guess. One man that was let out, a Mr. Davis, he's a rose grower here. I remember we worked to get him reinstated. I don't really recall whether he ever got back on his job or not. But I don't think that any administration, Republican or Democrat or whatever, when it's changed, you're going to have some personalities that conflict, and you're going to have to get rid of somebody. Well, that's what happened in Carter's case.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I know in Governor Dunn's case, many of his supporters wanted him to make big changes and fire a lot of people. But he established a policy of removing people only for cause. And that limited the jobs available, and actually caused some difficulty in some places where people wanted more appointments to be filled in. And I know in some places there had been quite a system of payoffs from private individuals doing business with the state to those in office. And that came to a stop. At least so far as I know, it completely stopped. Much of it, I am certain, did, in his administration. So how would you sum up his contributions to the state?

MR. WOMACK: I would say that Governor Dunn, if he didn't make a, as you said, a great governor, he made



a good governor in that he established the community colleges, several that, probably the program was already underway when Ellington went out, I don't know. He upgraded our mental hospitals; he did a lot in that area. And he ran a good, honest, clean government.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Mr. Womack, is there anything else about the campaign or administration you'd like to say for the record?

MR. WOMACK:                   Well, I don't know whether this is worth anything or not. I, as I mentioned before, did give the governor a set of the prior Tennessee governors' messages to the Legislature, and he seemed to appreciate that.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   He now has them on his bookshelf.

MR. WOMACK:                   Yes. And I enjoyed the two visits we made while he was governor in the Mansion up there, both he and Betty. We're still good friends, and I always enjoy meeting him whenever I run into him.

DR. CRAWFORD:                   Thank you, sir.













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